

their duties. But, as if enervated by the connection, they forgot the demand upon them for an enlarged and liberal criticism; they looked not upon the luxuriant imagination of Cockrell or the chaste consistency of Donaldson; they became learned upon steps and chimneys, talked of optics and expense, and awarded the premiums to plans which they pronounced it unadvisable to adopt. Finally, their opinions seemed to be in favour of Mr. Cockrell, whom they had not distinguished by a premium, and when they vacated their chairs, and the committee separated at Christmas (1839), that gentleman's was generally supposed to be the fortunate design.

But the field was now narrowed, and armed with all the knowledge that an inspection of the designs of previous candidates could bestow, and all the information that friendly influence could command, a new competitor appeared to dispute the prize, Mr. Tite descended into the arena; his previous spathy had departed; the oracles had at length spoken, and now that his influence could be concentrated, Mr. Richard Lambert Jones was himself again. The battle of interest was to be fought, and the Graham Committee revived in its pristine vigour. Accordingly, Mr. Cockrell and Mr. Donaldson presented their improved designs, and Mr. Tite his new one. Personal influence was resorted to, and no statement was too absurd, no absurdity too gross, and no grossness too contemptible for those who sought on the side of the new comer to adopt. They dwelt upon the expense of Mr. Cockrell's design, their statements were disproved; they disparaged its convenience, and what must have been of far more importance in the civic eye, its superior rental capabilities were demonstrated; they declared the model which Mr. Cockrell had prepared an imposition, in opposition to all the first architectural writers, and upon the authority of an anonymous builder; and finally, after an apparent competition, which the whole profession scouted as a fraudulent deception, they conferred upon Mr. Tite the high honour of the majority of their suffrages and their choice. They did not invite public examination; this time their partiality would have been too glaring.

Such was the competition. The merits of the different plans may be discussed at another time. What Mr. Tite has accomplished we now see, what Mr. Cockrell would have done with equal opportunities we can only conjecture. Their respective merits were not the grounds of the committee's decision, they have never been specified, for except that they were influenced by aulicity and interest, the committee can make no statement.

And why was all this? Is any man hardy enough to assert that had professional men of scientific knowledge and gentlemanly feeling presided over the contest different principles would not have led to a different result? Or will any one contend that civic honours, shrieval gowns, and aldermanic chairs confer architectural ability, discrimination, or taste? He who declared a model an imposition upon the authority of a builder whom he dared not name, was either an ignorant charlatan, or he was something worse than a quack in propounding as a truth what, if he knew any thing upon the subject, he must have known to be false. Those who so implicitly submitted to his dictum share the odium of his ignorance or his partiality, and in either case knew not how to decide themselves or to maintain the decision which others at their request had pronounced for them.

I speak not in censure of this committee alone. From the very nature of things any committee formed under similar circumstances could not have been expected to act otherwise. It is not in their nature. Interest they see at work above, beneath, and around them. It is essential to their existence, the atmosphere they breathe; and, even admitting that taste and knowledge would do much to modify the evil effects of such a state of things, they have it not. The chandler and the draper, the saddler and the potato-salesman, limited in education, exalted because of their wealth, and esteemed according to their ostentatious display, are not the persons most likely to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, when imagination and science are the matters in dispute. From men such as these are civic and corporate dignities principally chosen; they may be honest, in-

dustrious, persevering, skilful in trade, learned in calculations of bricks and mortar, even fluent speakers, and keen solicitors at law, but they are not for all this men entitled to sit in judgment upon the abilities of an architect, since architecture requires the study of years, and they can spare from the pursuits of commerce scarcely a single day. In all corporations, and in every other case where wealth and influence are the recognized signs of ability, unostentatious merit need not hope for an impartial trial, for its judges have not the knowledge that would enable them to be just.

Nor are those to whom the choice of architects in the less important local edifices is generally intrusted, more competent to decide in matters of this description. Grocers and cheese-mongers, fishmongers and publicans, butchers and coal-dealers, form at the best but a poor committee of taste. Judges of construction, or arbiters of architectural merit, they neither are nor pretend to be, at least in their sober moments, when the fumes exhaled from sensibility and vanity are evaporated; but none will, question their appreciation of influence, none dispute their keen perception of what may tend to increase their trade. The vote given to an architect may sell more sugar, or fish, or cheese, or meat, to his friends; they may forswear tee-totalism in favour of some friendly publican, or dash into the arena of fashion to reward some miniature Stultz. The merit of the design sinks into the extent of its author's connection, and the tradesman's ledger becomes the standard of the architect's ability. Too many of our public buildings vie in beauty, as in uniformity, with the money lines of account-books not to place the patrons of their existence beyond a doubt.

That there have been one or two instances of employers leaving plan and decoration to the discretion of their architect, so far as was consistent with their convenience, proves nothing against the general rule. Perhaps half a dozen houses in London have been

built under such circumstances, and when their novelty has ceased to excite wonder, it provokes contempt. People have become accustomed to the decisions of the haberdasher and the publican, and the gin shop and the shawl-warehouse are the standards of their taste. I question whether the plate-glass of Everington and Hitecock has not excited more admiration than the Alfred Life Office, or the Strand front of Exeter Hall. I am certain that the French Protestant Church was not deemed half so meritorious as the Aldgate facade of Moses the tailor, for smoke and dirt had obscured its coloured gargues, and stripped its imitations of marbles alike of their polish and their glare.

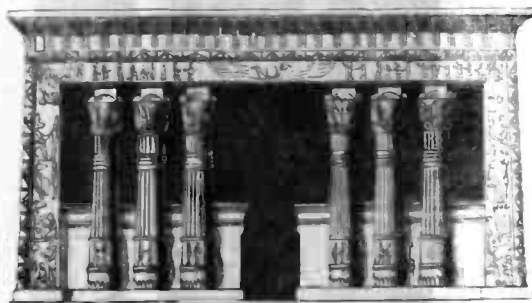
Nor have the falmintations of the Camdenians (who seem to have stood looking back upon the past until they have become rooted to the spot), aided by the vast influence of the clergy, with whose principles their views so well assort, been without their effect in ecclesiastical design. The school of Wren is forgotten, and that of Pugin is becoming popular: Christian and Pagan are the watch words. The Camdenians denounce every style but the pointed. Rectors and churchwardens are led away by their confident boldness, and architects, to gain patronage, bow to the churchwarden. The influence of example upon ignorance is again developed, indeed it would not be difficult to trace the slow progress of architectural invention to the operation of this principle. The cause and its effects act and react upon each other, fashion upon ignorance, and ignorance upon fashion. Similar principles work upon different materials, and the impartiality, and not the injustice of competitions ought to excite our wonder. Such will ever be the case while the public are ignorant of the true characteristics of architectural merit, and are still constituted in judgment.

Can this evil be avoided? We shall see.

(To be continued.)

W. C.

LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE AND ANTIQUITIES.*



VIEW OF THE TEMPLE OF LATOPOLIS, NOW ESNEH.

Referred to in No. 38, page 461.

LECTURE II.

THE most wonderful tombs which the hand of man ever raised to cover his mortal remains are unquestionably the pyramids. (A learned writer, Wilkins, *de Ling. Copt.*, states that in the Coptic tongue *pyra* signifies a king, and *miri*, a race, or generation.) These colossal structures, whose lofty summits seem lost amid the obscurity of time, and which appear to have been intended by their founders to endure to eternity, these astonishing masses have engaged the attention of all travellers by their air of antiquity, their imposing magnitude, and their strange destination. The pyramids are situated on the plains of Gizeh or Jizeh, near Kairo, and of Sacarrah; the latter would be considered wonderful were they not greatly surpassed in size by those of Gizeh, where are the three grand pyramids (there are about twenty smaller) which bear the names of the kings of Memphis, who are supposed to have erected them; the largest is

called after Cheops (the Chemsis of Diodorus), the second CEPHEUS (the Senusis of some writers), and the third and smallest, MYCERINUS, the son of Cheops, who was brother to Cephrenes. The chronology of the ancient Egyptians is involved in so much obscurity, that it is impossible to draw a satisfactory conclusion as to the date of the pyramids from the conflicting statements of different writers. Whilst some would place their date (as Mr. Wilkinson) at more than 2100 years B.C., Lord Lyndsay considers the pyramids as the work of the shepherd kings; and whilst some, again, place their date at the time of the Israelites being in bondage, about 1550 B.C., others bring down the reigns of the three kings to the ninth and tenth centuries before the Christian era. The Arabs and the Turks considered them the work of the Pharaohs, the pyramids being called by the former *Ligbet Pharaon*, Pharaoh's mountains, and by the latter *Pharon Daglary*.[†] Ancient

[†] That delightful writer, the great old Father, Strabo, "the pyramids, dating with age, have forgotten the names of their founders."

* Continued from page 461.